

ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR
ELECTORAL PROCESS

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 2004

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit the following statement on the FY 2005 Funding of the Federal Election and Election Assistance Commission. As Ranking Minority Member of the Committee on House Administration, I am especially interested in the Appropriations Committee's funding recommendation for the Federal Election Commission, the Election Assistance Commission and programs implementing the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). While these commissions and the programs they administer comprise a very small portion of the federal budget, the process of electing federal officials is critical to the health of our democracy.

I am pleased that the committee provided full funding for the Federal Election Commission (FEC). The FEC administers campaign finance and presidential election laws, and in recent years it has received additional responsibilities.

Although the process has been contentious at times, I am happy to see that both sides of the committee came together and not only met the authorized funding of \$10 million for the EAC, but exceed it by \$5 million.

I recognize that the President's delay in appointing members to the EAC gave the commission a late start, but I remain hopeful that the EAC can regain lost time during the coming fiscal year. Given the 2000 Florida election debacle and widespread public interest in election procedures, we need to assure voters nationwide of the sanctity of their votes in the electronic age. In the coming year, I expect that the EAC will use this additional money to devote appropriate attention to standards and technology issues with the assistance of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

The EAC and its NIST partner must expedite the development of proper standards so the American people can realize the potential of HAVA, especially the election reform programs, which the Appropriations Committee also did not fund. The EAC must also establish the Help America Vote Foundation, as authorized by HAVA, so the foundation can help civic organizations encourage voter participation.

Implementing a new federal program like HAVA is often fraught with difficulty. In this case, however, there is not a moment to lose, for it is our democracy at risk. The Committee on House Administration looks forward to working with the FEC, the EAC, state election officials, and interest groups to ensure that federal election laws and programs achieve their important purpose.

Again, I would like to commend the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Transportation-Treasury subcommittee for including this critical funding for the EAC.

SUPPORT OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN
VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER
ASSISTANCE ACT

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 2004

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Good Samaritan Volunteer Firefighter Assistance Act (H.R. 1787).

First, this bill would prohibit civil lawsuits from being brought against a person who donates fire-control or fire-rescue equipment to a volunteer fire company, under state or federal law, for personal, property damages or loss, or death caused by the equipment subsequent to the donation. But this prohibition against lawsuits would not apply in cases where the donor's actions constitute gross negligence, intentional misconduct, or where the person is the manufacturer of the fire-control or fire-rescue equipment.

Second, the bill would preempt state laws to the extent that those laws are inconsistent with the bill. But it would not preempt state law that provides additional protection from liability for an individual who donates firefighting equipment.

Finally, the bill would also require the U.S. Justice Department to review and report to Congress on donations of equipment made to volunteer firefighter companies in each state during the previous five-year period. Such report would include an analysis of the most effective way to fund firefighter companies for each state, whether first-responder funding is sufficient, and the best method to make sure donated equipment to volunteer companies is in usable condition.

This bill protects people, who out of the goodness of their own hearts, donate much-needed equipment to our brave firefighters who selflessly volunteer to defend our communities. We all know that there are many pressing and unmet needs among volunteer fire departments across the country. Yes, I was pleased to vote for the FY 2005 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill when it passed the House last June and it provides \$32 billion to improve our nation's homeland security, including several billion for our firefighters and other first responders. We would like to have done more, but the dire fiscal condition of the federal budget precludes us from doing so.

It makes common sense to me that we then make certain that these so-called good Samaritans can make supplementary donations of equipment to help meet the needs of volunteer firefighters. This bill does that, while also safeguarding against shoddy donations that might jeopardize the lives of our volunteer firefighters and in our communities.

IN HONOR AND REMEMBRANCE OF
OFFICER TIMOTHY JACOB LAIRD

HON. JULIA CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 2004

Ms. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and service of Officer Timothy Jacob Laird of Indianapolis, Indiana, who was tragically shot and killed on August

18, 2004 during an act of bravery in the line of duty.

Known as Jake to his friends, Timothy Laird was born on September 17, 1972 in Logansport, Indiana. At the age of 4, Jake already knew he wanted to be a police officer. He graduated from Warren Central High School in 1991 and enlisted in the Marine Corps, where he spent 8 years in service to his country. In 2000, he joined the Indianapolis Police Department in the 93rd Recruit Class, fulfilling his lifelong dream.

Jake Laird was a member of Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #86. He took part in the investigation of more than 600 incidents during his 4 years of service with the Indianapolis Police Department, earning two commendations.

On August 18th, Officer Laird responded to reports of a man shooting a machine gun in a southside neighborhood of Indianapolis. The suspect's indiscriminate shooting injured four officers, who were treated in area hospitals. Officer Laird was fatally wounded, becoming the 56th officer to die in the line of duty in the 150-year history of the Indianapolis Police Department. He was 31.

Officer Laird's bravery and sacrifice for the people of Indianapolis has touched the lives of his community. On August 23rd, hundreds of citizens, many of whom had never met Timothy Laird, lined up along the 20-mile funeral route in silent tribute. Over 1,000 police cars from all over Indiana, as well as Kentucky, Ohio, and Illinois, took part in the procession honoring his service. Police Chief Jerry Barker awarded him the Indianapolis Police Department's Medal of Honor posthumously, only the fourth time it had been given in 150 years.

I ask my colleagues to join me in extending my deepest condolences to his wife Jennifer and their beloved 7-year-old daughter Kaylee; his parents Deborah and Michael Laird and Timothy and Barb Althouse; his brothers Gaben Laird, Christopher Laird, Timothy Althouse, and Dan and Matt Wilhelm; his sisters Sarah Althouse and Heather Laird; and his grandparents Mrs. Howard Dodson and Donald and Rosemary McEldowney.

A United States veteran, beloved father, husband and family member, Jake Laird will be deeply missed. His strength and service to his country and community will be remembered always by all whom he inspired and loved.

The citizens of Indianapolis extend our heartfelt gratitude for his sacrifice and dedication to public service.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LANE EVANS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 2004

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I was not present for votes on Monday, September 13, 2004.

Had I been here I would have voted "aye" on H. Con. Res. 363 expressing the grave concern of Congress regarding the continuing gross violations of human rights and civil liberties of the Syrian people by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic.

I would have voted "aye" on H. Res. 667 expressing support for freedom in Hong Kong.

I would have voted "aye" on H. Res. 760 condemning the series of terrorist attacks

against the Russian Federation that occurred in late August and early September 2004.

CELEBRATING NATIONAL
HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 15, 2004

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of this week's anniversary of independence of numerous Latin American countries, of our country's National Hispanic Heritage Month, and in special recognition of Latinos in my district and throughout our country.

Today, September 15, five Latin American countries commemorate their independence, including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on September 16 and September 18, respectively. I join these nations in mutual celebration of liberty, democracy and freedom, values which we hold so dear.

Today also marks the beginning of our country's National Hispanic Heritage Month. During this month, America celebrates the culture and traditions of our friends and neighbors who trace their roots to Mexico and the Spanish-speaking nations of Central America, South America, and the Caribbean.

I am proud that my district is the home of more than 100,000 residents of Hispanic or Latino descent. This community is comprised of individuals who cherish their various ethnicities, national origins, and opinions. And yet, the Hispanic-American community is united by the importance that they place on faith, family, hard work, and the hope of sharing in a better America. We in Congress must re-dedicate ourselves to ensuring that our friends and neighbors in the Hispanic community have the opportunity to build their businesses, take full advantage of our schools and universities, and unite their families across borders—a task upon which my colleagues in the Congressional Hispanic Caucus have endeavored for many years.

Mr. Speaker, the Hispanic community is a vital part of my district and our country. I ask all of my colleagues to join me in support and celebration of the many Latin American countries celebrating their independence this week, of the beginning of our great National Hispanic Heritage Month, and of all our Hispanic brethren.

HONORING 115 YEARS OF HISTORY

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 15, 2004

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the West Morris Area YMCA, in Randolph Township, Morris County, New Jersey, a vibrant community I am proud to represent! On September 17, 2004, the good citizens of Randolph and neighboring municipalities are celebrating the West Morris Area YMCA's One-Hundred-Fifteenth Anniversary.

One hundred and fifteen years ago, the West Morris Area YMCA was founded in the

town of Dover. The year 1889 was the beginning of a YMCA that established itself today as one of the area's distinguished community organizations.

The First Methodist Episcopal Church in Dover was home of the first YMCA. Known then as the YMCA of Dover, The "Y" soon attracted nearly 200 of the area's youth per day.

In 1908, the YMCA expanded beyond Dover to include Succasunna, Wharton, Whippany, Rockaway, Chester, and German Valley, now Long Valley. For the next four decades the Y maintained its popularity, occupying various locations on or near Blackwell Street in Dover.

As membership continued to grow, after World War II, there was a need for a more permanent facility. In 1951 the YMCA headquarters on Route 46 at the corner of North Bergen Street was dedicated.

By the late 1970's the need for a building, which offered a gymnasium and a pool, was becoming evident. Expansion of the Dover building was possible but parking was a problem as the Y began to attract more and more participants from the growing residential areas outside of Dover, including Randolph Township.

In 1976, the name West Morris Area YMCA was established to reflect this expanding service area and ground was broken for a new facility on Dover Chester Road in Randolph in 1977. The brand new YMCA, offering a pool, gymnasium, fitness equipment, racquetball courts and program space was officially opened in 1979.

The YMCA is dedicated to helping all people, regardless of age, race, religion, sex, or economic status to reach their fullest potential. It is with great pride we all look upon the volunteers and staff of the past and present that are the true strength of this remarkable organization.

Mr. Speaker, I urge you and my colleagues to join me in congratulating West Morris Area YMCA on the celebration of its one-hundred-fifteen years serving the western part of the Morris County!

TRIBUTE TO STAFF SERGEANT
DAVID WEISENBERG AND SPECIALIST BENJAMIN ISENBERG

HON. DARLENE HOOLEY

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 15, 2004

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, scripture tells us that for everything there is a season; there will be times of planting, times of harvest, times of peace, and even times of war. And yet, my heart is heavy when we bury our children. Staff Sergeant David Weisenberg and Specialist Benjamin Isenberg were killed in an ambush in Taji, Iraq yesterday. These two proud soldiers were patrolling the frontier of hope—ready, willing, and able to stand up for the freedoms of people they never really knew. These two men were Oregon's future. They were brave, idealistic, and passionate men—united in the belief that their individual sacrifice might hasten the day that all people could enjoy the sweet blessings of freedom and liberty.

In his Gettysburg Address, Lincoln explained that there was nothing he could say that would matter as much as what the fallen

had done—that his words were spoken on hallowed ground, ground made sacred by the purity of self-sacrifice. Friends, colleagues, fellow Americans—his truth endures today. Both men were dedicated professionals that came from families accustomed to public service, individual sacrifice. I am blessed by their example; I am proud, touched—forever changed by their humble act of courage.

Taji is not Sheridan, it is not Portland—the Iraqi civilians they gave their lifeblood for were not their neighbors, friends, or family. That didn't matter to them. It never does for heroes. The citizens of Taji were people in need, and that was good enough for David and Benjamin. These men did their duty because they believed in the spirit of America; they wore the uniform and accepted the risks because they knew that long journeys result from small steps. David and Benjamin were more than Oregon Patriots—though patriots they were. David and Benjamin were the face of the very essence of what it means to be American.

So today, I ask that we recommit ourselves to the ideals of our democracy; that we renew our personal investment in the America that David and Benjamin were willing to fight and ultimately die for. It is to them and those that follow that we owe our time, talent, and treasure. It is to them that we owe a solution that brings honor to their sacrifice.

Let us do these things and bring about the kind of society that David and Benjamin wouldn't just be willing to die for, but a community of liberty they would celebrate.

SIKHS CELEBRATE 400TH ANNIVERSARY OF THEIR HOLY SCRIPTURES

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 15, 2004

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month Sikhs around the world celebrated the 400th anniversary of the first installation of their holy scriptures, known as the Guru Granth Sahib. The Guru Granth Sahib, written in the lifetimes of the 10 Sikh Gurus, contains the writings of the Sikh Gurus as revealed to them and some writings by other saints who share their basic philosophy. When the Indian military attacked the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Sikhism's holiest shrine, in June 1984, they shot bullet holes through the Guru Granth Sahib.

There was a major celebration of the anniversary in Amritsar, which was attended by the Indian President, Abdul Kalam; by the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh; and by the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Buddhism, among many others. Apparently, India was trying to maintain its false front of secularism. But the people of South Asia know better.

The Guru Granth Sahib established Sikhism as a monotheistic religion that believes in the equality of all people. Guru Gobind Singh, the last of the Sikh Gurus, who consecrated the Guru Granth Sahib, made independence a basic principle of the religion.

As you know, India continues to oppress the Sikhs. Over 250,000 Sikhs have been murdered at the hands of the Hindu militant Indian government. In addition, the Indian regime has murdered over 89,000 Muslims in Kashmir, over 300,000 Christians in Nagaland, and tens